Required Texts:


**This book was edited specifically for this course**

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to contemporary themes in Latin American society from a geographic perspective. Latin America is in the midst of fundamental economic, social, environmental, and political change affecting the daily activities of its approximately 500 million inhabitants. To better understand the major issues confronting the region we will employ an interdisciplinary approach to inquiry focusing on the interconnections between the environment, economics, culture, history, and politics and how these processes manifest themselves spatially.

We will study the development patterns and issues for the region as a whole and the distinct features of select places throughout Latin America. Course themes emerge from the striking contrasts found in the region: the modern mega-cities and the expansive shantytowns; the increasing presence of multinational corporations and the growing informal economy, including the drug economy; mass resort tourism and the challenges of developing ecotourism. Also, of concern, is how people are responding to these structural societal transformations including the impacts of migration and the increasing role and importance of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and social movements.

Course Format

There are quizzes to be completed for every chapter. You have one hour from logging on to complete each quiz, therefore it is advisable that the chapter has been read and understood prior to beginning the quiz. There is a short written assignment as well and instructions are available online. All quizzes will be available to you on the first day of class and must be completed by the due date as stated on WebCT.

Course Schedule

Introduction (must read, but no quiz)

Ch. 1 Eras or Errors: An Historical and Geographical Overview of Latin America’s Economic
and Political Development
Ch. 2 Neoliberal Exports and Regional Vulnerability: Overview and Critical Assessment
Ch. 3 Urbanization, Migration and Employment in Latin America: A Review of Trends
Ch. 4 Architectural Icons and Urban Form: The Power of Place in Latin America
Ch. 5 US-Mexico Borderlands
Ch. 6 Spaces of Tourism
Ch. 7 Sustainable Development and Ecotourism: General Principles and Eastern Caribbean Case Study

**June 18-19: MIDTERM EXAM**

**TERM PAPER DUE ON JUNE 25**
Ch. 8 Drug Geographies
Ch. 9 NGOs and Ongoing Changes in Latin American Society
Ch. 10 The Spatialities of Latin American Social Movements
Ch. 11 Urban Environmental Politics in Latin America
Ch. 12 Transnational Communities, Identities and Moving Populations
Ch. 13 Latinos in the US
Ch. 14 Cinematic Spaces of Latin America

**Evaluation:**
Students will be evaluated by a variety of evaluation tools, including: exams, writing assignments, and quizzes. The evaluations will be based on the ability to demonstrate basic knowledge/comprehension of the subject matter as well as the ability to apply critical thinking skills to the subject matter, by evaluating issues, applying knowledge acquired, synthesizing multiple points/ideas, issues and knowledge. Listed below are the intended learning outcomes for this course and the evaluation and assessment tools used in the class to determine your success.

**Intended Outcomes:**
In accordance with best teaching practices, intended outcomes for this course are made transparent to students at the beginning of the semester. These outcomes represent the knowledge and skill set that you will be expected to demonstrate your competence with during the semester. Assessment and evaluation tools used during this time are designed to determine your success in acquiring these knowledge and skill sets.

**Goal A: Building a Knowledge Base**
Students in this course will identify and define key terms and concepts central to the humanized landscape of Latin America.

**Goal B: Acquiring Knowledge**
Students will develop skills for acquiring new knowledge.
Students will recall information presented to them textually, cartographically and through numeric or graphic communication.
*Assessment/Evaluation tool:* Quizzes, Essay Exam Questions, Term paper.

**Goal C: Problem Solving Skills**
Students will demonstrate their problem solving skills. Students will analyze non-textual messages in the landscape and from maps, graphics, etc. 

Students will apply abstract concepts, such as Dependency Theory and Neoliberalism to real-world locations in Latin America.
Assessment/Evaluation tool: Quizzes, Essay Exam Questions
Students will evaluate, compare and contrast opposing views on subject debated within and beyond the academy.
Assessment/Evaluation tool: Debate paper
Students will explain selected interactions between and among culture, economics, politics, natural resources and ethnicity.
Assessment/Evaluation tool: Quizzes, Essay Exam Questions, Term Paper

Goal D: Communicating Knowledge
Students in this course will be able to communicate ideas by using words, numbers, maps and other graphic devices. Students will effectively communicate ideas and opinions using textual communication.
Assessment/Evaluation tool: Term paper and Essay Exams.

Evaluation:

1. Quizzes (5 points each; 70 points total). There will be 14 online quizzes, one from each chapter that you read.
2. Term Paper (30 points). Each student is required to a paper on a theme related to a Latin American topic. Specifics to follow. **DUE JUNE 25**
3. Exam (30 points). One essay exam will be given in the middle of the semester. You will have two days to complete the exam.